

National Adoption Day was started in 2000 by the Alliance for Children's Rights, the Freddie Mac Foundation, and the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption and helped complete foster care adoptions in nine jurisdictions in its first year. National Adoption Day has quickly grown since that time. In 2006, a milestone was surpassed, as National Adoption Day was celebrated in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico for the first time. In total last year, over 3,300 adoptions were finalized on National Adoption Day.

I am committed to assisting children in the United States to find stable, loving, and permanent homes. Additionally, I support the goals of National Adoption Day to encourage others to adopt children from foster care, to build stronger ties between local adoption agencies, courts, and adoption advocacy organizations, and to continue to research and learn more about families wanting to adopt and the children waiting to be adopted.

I am proud that Members of the Senate continue to support ways to make adoption easier and more affordable. Since the cost of adoption can be very high, we ought to do what we can to lessen this initial burden for the exceptional people who provide caring homes for children. Adoption proceedings and legal fees for some domestic adoptions can cost more than \$40,000. To ease some of this burden, Congress adopted a \$10,000 tax credit for adoption expenses. If we ask individuals to care for and adopt children, we must provide some relief from the financial burdens associated with that care. The adoption tax credit is an effective vehicle to provide this relief, and it is vitally important that this tax credit does not expire at the end of 2010.

In keeping with the celebration of adoption, this year I am proud to recognize Audrey Kirkpatrick as an Angel in Adoption. Audrey is a social worker with Catholic Social Services in Rapid City, SD. She is an integral part of Catholic Social Services offering her knowledge to fellow employees and often her services to birth mothers and adoptive families 24 hours per day.

I am also proud to recognize the Amiotte family, whose portrait is displayed in my front office as a part of the Voice of Adoption Adoptive Family Portrait Project. David and Malinda Amiotte began their foster care experience not planning to adopt. However, after meeting and growing attached to biological siblings Medina and David, and biological sisters JoAnne and Karen, David and Malinda wanted to keep these sibling groups together. Despite challenges with the legal process, adoptions for all of their children have been finalized, and I wish them many years of happiness in the future.

The commitment of adoptive parents in South Dakota and throughout our country to provide children with safe, permanent, and loving homes will, of course, have a positive impact on their

lives. As we celebrate National Adoption Awareness Month and National Adoption Day, I call on my colleagues to continue supporting efforts to make adoption easier for parents, children, and other important participants in the adoption process.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I would like to add my voice to the growing chorus, in the Senate and across the world, supporting Senate ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

While we have made great strides towards eradicating blatant discrimination based on race or social class in our country, far too many women around the world continue to face oppression and violence simply because of their gender.

While it may be easy to believe that this only is a foreign problem, one that does not exist in our homes, this is simply not the case. An estimated 30 percent of American women experience some form of assault in their lifetime. And even if women do not experience violence, discrimination can take many other forms. Hundreds of millions of women across the globe are living their lives facing oppression. Despite all the advancements towards social equality, there still exists a strong undercurrent of gender-based prejudice.

Beyond simply striking it from our laws, we must also strike it from our hearts and demonstrate that ending discrimination means recognizing basic rights. All women should have access to health care. All women should have access to education. And all women should be allowed to live their lives free of fear.

The United States has always represented a beacon of hope and opportunity to oppressed peoples around the world. While our Nation is among the best in ensuring equal rights and opportunities to women, we must never grow complacent in this constant struggle or believe that we have conquered sex-based discrimination.

That is why I believe it is so important that the Senate ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Ratification of this Convention represents a step towards empowerment, not just of American women but women everywhere.

Ratification also presents an opportunity to reassert American values to the world. At a time when our Nation's image abroad is under assault and our commitment to fundamental human rights and norms has been questioned, it is critical that we reaffirm our repudiation of discrimination in all forms.

The full realization of women's rights is vital to the development and well-being of people of all nations. The United States becoming a member of this convention is an important step toward that reality.

I urge my colleagues to join me in calling for the prompt ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CHESHIRE HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS SWIM TEAM

• Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I offer my heartfelt congratulations to some of Connecticut's finest high school athletes: the girls swim team of Cheshire High School. Cheshire High recently set a national record with an astounding 235 dual meet wins in a row.

With its victory, Cheshire High breaks a record that had been held for 13 years by Elkhart Central High in Indiana—one of the longest-standing, most respected marks in high school swimming. Even more incredibly, the Connecticut streak dates back all the way to 1986, before any members of the current team were born.

Their record-setting night brought together parents who decorated the pool, painted their faces, and dressed up as the school's Ram mascot; more than 200 paying spectators; and the support of an entire community. For a town still struggling to overcome the memory of last July's notorious home-invasion murders, it was a joyous community celebration; I hope it will go a little way toward restoring the spirit of this Connecticut town.

For their teamwork and success, I applaud the Cheshire High swimmers:

Megan Aitro, Tara Aitro, Olivia Amato, Alexandria Barry, Jessica Bauer, Kailee Brown, Bridget Carmichael, Alyssa Carofano, Tina Chang, Katherine Collins, Kayla DeLuca, Adriana DiCenzo, Nicole Dicks, Rachael Dioses, Kelly Dolyak, Danielle Forrest, Amy Hudak, Kathryn Hummel, Kimberly Jerome, Jasmine Liu, Samantha Loignon, Shirin Lowell, Sofia Martone, Alexandra Maurice, Mairin McKinlay, Jessica Metcalf, Melissa Metcalf, Michaela Morr, Jessica Morse, Megan Mostoller, Stephanie Nguyen, Catherine Patrell, Brianna Perazella, Lauren Piccolino, Emilie Ptaszynski, Elissa Rosenfield, Sarah Schulefand, Morgan Schwenn, Meghan Shanahan, Sydney Smith, Jennifer Thompson, Margaret Tooley, Emma Velcofsky, and Elizabeth Visconti.

Congratulations are due as well their assistant coaches, William Lapman and Kristen Shanley, and their dedicated coach, Ed Aston, whom his team pulled, fully dressed, into the pool once the record was broken.

It is a true team, and town, achievement; and if I could list here the names of all 278 athletes who contributed their part to the streak, I certainly would. Instead I simply extend my admiration and my best wishes for many more wins to come.●